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## My Note Book.

*Leonato.*—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?  
*Don John.*—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.  
*—Much Ado About Nothing.*



THE marriage of the Duke of Marlborough with the wealthy Mrs. Hamersley, of New York, suggests the thought that if the event had occurred but two or three years ago, it might have saved the dispersion of the art collection long the pride of Blenheim. It was said by Dr. Waagen, the German architect and critic, that if nothing more were to be seen in England than Blenheim, with its twelve miles of park, and its paintings and tapestries, it would repay one to visit that country. The magnificent park, and the castle, with its frontage of eight hundred and fifty feet, are still to be seen; being entailed, the present spendthrift duke could not sell them even if he would. But, alas! for the treasures of art collected by six generations of Churchills bearing the title of the hero of Malplaquet and Oudenarde—dispersed literally to the four corners of the globe to furnish funds, to gratify the coarse pleasures of the seventh wearer of the coronet. One can imagine the new mistress of Blenheim with a heart-ache as she surveys the vast apartments and galleries now shorn of the canvases of Vandyck and Rubens, and the noble tapestries which for centuries were their glory. But one need not waste sympathy in that direction, for I am told that our American duchess has no pretensions to taste in art.

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ALTHOUGH I have been taken to task by some of the more extravagant admirers of Mr. J. L. Sargent, for intimating that much of that clever artist's portraiture is slipshod and quite unworthy of his reputation, I find that I am not quite alone in that opinion. That eminent critic, Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in *The Portfolio*, in noticing the Royal Academy Exhibition, expresses surprise "that any artist who could paint such a vivid portrait and masterly feat of work as Mr. Sargent's 'Mrs. H. G. Marquand,' could stoop to such a performance as the effigy of 'Mrs. E. D. Boit,' and still further that the hangers should place such a piece of impudence as the latter on the line."

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IN his preface to Mr. Paul Eudel's seventh annual volume on the Hôtel Drouot, Mr. Octave Uzanne gives an interesting but not prepossessing account of that famous institution, and some suggestions for its amelioration which may be not without value to auctioneers and their victims elsewhere than in France. "It is abominable, this Hôtel Drouot," says Mr. Uzanne; "it is unworthy of Paris and of her prodigious collectors, unworthy of the rôle which our new society assigns to it, unworthy of the charges that fall upon it." And he wishes for a fire to ruin and purify this temple of bric-à-brac, where bronchitis awaits its victims, and typhus circulates in the nauseous warmth of the atmosphere; worse than this, where one has need of "lotions, pheniquées d'être assuré contre les caresses cutanées des parasites aux instincts émigrants."

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THE celebrated auction mart, built thirty-six years ago on what was then waste ground near the old Opéra, is no longer large enough for its purpose, nor in any way suited to what should be the requirements of those who at present need to resort to it. In Paris, where they date the introduction of modern modes of life from the Franco-Prussian War, just as we do from our Civil War, there has grown up since that period an immense class of people in comfortable circumstances whose notion of what is implied in that phrase includes more or less of the artistic in their surroundings. Accordingly, as Mr. Uzanne says, "the dealers in antiquities, the keepers of Japanese and Turkish bazars, the brocanteurs of precious objects and of rare books, have more than doubled since the 'Année terrible.'" At the same time the condition of financial and business affairs has approached what it has always been with us. Fortunes are made and lost more rapidly; and, as a consequence of all this, the traffic of the Hôtel Drouot has assumed almost the same important proportions as that of a great market where are bought and sold the necessities of life. He proposes, then, the erection of a building suited to present needs; a monument of noble lines and of vast proportions "such as those in the principal cities of the United States, notably at Philadelphia!" This will be

news to the Quaker City! Can Mr. Uzanne have mistaken the new Philadelphia City Hall for an auction building, I wonder? This new Hôtel Drouot, he thinks, should be open to the air and the light, ingeniously arranged, easy to keep clean, ample, elegant and comfortable. Each salesroom should have its semicircle of raised seats disposed as at a theatre, to give each a good view, and with alleys to allow of access to the auctioneer's table and desk. The places nearest the latter should be sold to serious collectors only; and there should be a number of "petits boys"—Mr. Uzanne, spite of his unseemly quarrel with Mr. Lang, has an affection for English words—to run about and take the cards and the money of the buyers, to pass small objects which people may wish to see without leaving their seats, and to offer catalogues and lead-pencils to those who wish to take notes. In the centre of the building should be a courtyard for carriages, toilet-rooms, with dependances, a post of commissionaires, a telegraph and telephone office, a room for correspondence, and a refreshment-room.

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NEXT, he would attack the corporation of commissaires-priseurs—happily in this country there is no such "ring" of auctioneers as this Parisian company—modifying their privileges, annulling their abuses and distributing licenses with a freer hand, bringing things, in short, to something like the state with which certain persons here are beginning to show themselves discontented. But the experts would suffer most from his innovations. "Those brave experts who too often take the Piræus for a man, and the Apocalypse for a primitive German," Mr. Uzanne mentions by name most of those whom he would spare: Ferral and Lasquin for pictures and drawings of the old masters, Porquet and Émile Paul for books, Bouillon and Mayer for engravings, Charavay for autographs, Ch. Mannheim, and Bloche (the gentleman lately charged with organizing mock auctions!) for objects of art, Hoffmann for medals, Rollin and Feuardent for Greek and Roman antiquities, and Vanderheim for diamonds. These, and some ten or fifteen others, he would form into a society of experts, the business of which would be to assure the public against the ignorance and roguishness of the small dealers, who sell portraits of Louis XV. attributed to Velasquez, and busts of Molière supposed to be modelled from life by Clodion.

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THE painter Van Beers, who got himself into a pretty scrape by an attempt to play a double game of falsification and disavowal of his own works, is still the talk of Paris, where there is an exhibition of his works in the gallery of Mr. Durand-Ruel, in the Rue de Sèze. It may be remembered that at Ostend he caused the arrest of a dealer for having on sale four pictures signed by him, which, he contended, were not his. The dealer called on the man who had consigned him the pictures to explain, and this latter hunted up testimony which showed conclusively that Van Beers employed less known painters to counterfeit his works. If the copies turned out well, Van Beers signed them and sold them as his, dividing the proceeds with the real painter. If not very good, he got his servant to sign them, so that he might afterward claim, as in this case, that they were forgeries. Sometimes he touched up these works, sometimes not, and occasionally he put his name to an original work of one of his assistants. Van Beers, when cross-examined, admitted all this, but claimed that it was a trick of the trade, "a painter's farce," which his accomplices should not have divulged. He insisted that the pictures in question did not come from this manufactory which he carries on; but the judge, very properly, non-suited him, and declared it to be his opinion that Van Beers himself should be prosecuted.

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THE Theatre of this city translates from a French paper what is meant to be a defence of Van Beers. The gist of it is that all the chief Parisian artists sell duplicates of their pictures and Van Beers was pounced down upon because he happened not to be in the "ring," so to speak. Munkacsy—who duplicates Mrs. Wilstach's picture, "Last Hours of a Condemned Man," and no one knows how many other canvases sold to Americans as original works—is, moreover, quoted as having told Van Beers that he was "trop ingenu." How all this can excuse the manifest dishonesty of a painter who sells copies of his pictures made by his employés and signed by himself, it takes a Parisian expert in Parisian methods to explain.

IT is certain, however, that many French artists of high reputation do not scruple to sell replicas of their paintings without the consent of the original buyers. Perusing the pages of M. Paul Eudel's annual volume reviewing the transactions at the Hôtel Drouot last year, I notice, in illustration it would seem of this point, that at the sale of paintings belonging to Goupil & Co. on the occasion of the reorganization of the firm under its present name of Boussod, Valadon & Cie., Boulanger's "Via Appia" brought \$1330, and Dagnan-Bouveret's "Un Accident" brought \$2050. Both of these pictures—or rather pictures respectively by these artists, and with these same titles—were sold years ago to Americans. Boulanger's "Via Appia" was bought by Mr. A. T. Stewart for \$3500, and at the dispersion of his collection last year it brought \$1000. Dagnan-Bouveret's "Un Accident" was imported by Mr. Avery. Its present location I do not recall. It seems to me that American buyers of important pictures should insist every time on a guarantee from the artist that no duplicates or "colorable imitations" shall be made without their consent. Their purchases annually represent so large a sum of money, and their payments are so liberal, that they could afford to take such a stand, and it does seem they should do so for their own protection.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD was the object of no small amount of abuse in this country because he was inclined to rank us among the uncivilized nations of the earth; but here is our own Secretary of the Treasury inferentially doing exactly the same thing. "No nation claiming to be civilized," he says, in his statement to Congress, "imposes duties upon works of art at all commensurate with those levied under the tariff of the United States." Mr. H. Marquand—son of the esteemed New York connoisseur of that name—takes this for his text in a well-considered and interesting article in *The New Princeton Review*. This is, perhaps, the most valuable contribution that has appeared on this subject, and one would think that it cannot but have good influence in the counsels of our lawmakers, who have at present under consideration the petition of American painters and sculptors protesting against the "protection" forced upon them, and praying that the duty on foreign works of art be removed altogether. He starts out by reminding us that the tariff of 1857, like that of 1846, admitted paintings and statuary free of duty, and that it was only when the necessities of the war demanded the raising of revenue from every available source, a duty of only ten per cent was placed upon these articles in 1861. His point that would seem likely to prove most potent with Congress is that, under the higher tariff, the revenue of the Government from this source shows a marked decrease. The figures put forward are very suggestive. It appears that "the interval between the passage of the present law and the date of its taking effect was marked, as was to be expected, by an unprecedented increase in importations, and the period immediately following the change by as noticeable a decrease. The average annual importations for the eight years, 1872 to 1879 inclusive, had been about \$1,130,000, the highest amount reached being in the Centennial year." The figures for the ensuing years are given as follows:

"Under ten per cent duty."	
1880.....	\$2,104,565
1881.....	2,221,881
1882.....	2,800,583
1883.....	3,128,593
"Under thirty per cent duty."	
1884.....	\$830,801
1885.....	1,383,697
1886.....	946,958
1887.....	2,332,436

THE report for nine months of the current year [the fiscal year presumably, for the article I am quoting is only published in July, i. e., the seventh month] shows a falling off again of more than a quarter (28.7 per cent) compared with the importations during a similar period of last year. That is to say, the importation for the four years subsequent to the increase of the duty are some forty-six per cent less than for a like period immediately before. . . . The unavoidable inference is that at least a million dollars a year less are now spent for works of art than, under a more liberal policy, would probably have been expended.

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IT is pointed out that one of the results of the increase in the duty has been that foreign artists have come over for a few months to paint their pictures here and thus evade the duty. That "they have flocked to



our shores" is an exaggeration. Herkomer, Archer, Munkacsy, Beyle, Bertier and the etcher Rajon are the only names I can recall in support of this statement.

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ONE of the minor annoyances of the present condition of affairs, stated by Mr. Marquand, is that a work of art on which duty has been paid, if sent out of the country, cannot be reimported without paying duty a second time. An irritating illustration of the injustice of this is shown in the supposititious case of a person owning fine tapestries on which a heavy duty has been paid; they need restoration, but "there are no workmen in this country competent to work upon them. They cannot be sent to Europe without paying a second duty of half their value on their return, and skilled workmen cannot be sent for to do the work here, because that would be a violation of the law prohibiting the importation of contract labor! And so a noble work of art must rot on the walls."

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IN conclusion, returning to the text of the Secretary of the Treasury's remark concerning the attitude of "the nations claiming to be civilized," Mr. Marquand remarks that the nations and colonies which admit works of art free are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Great Britain, India, New South Wales, and Victoria. "Russia imposes a tax of thirty cents per thirty-six pounds on certain statuary, but includes pictures, curiosities, and articles 'not having the usual qualifications of merchandise' on the free list. China has a tax of five per cent on works of art, if for sale; and Turkey charges forty cents a pound on pictures and allows the importation of twenty pounds of statuary for a dollar." This is a splendid idea—taxing sculpture and paintings by the pound! How could our Solons in Congress have let their rivals of the Celestial kingdom so get ahead of them? "Portugal collects five per cent on paintings and one per cent on statues, and Spain gets a specific duty of nineteen cents off every picture, and seven cents off every ten pounds of statuary imported. Hawaii and Corea collect ten per cent ad valorem. New Zealand, fifteen, and Canada, following a bad example, twenty. Mexico, however, only exacts fifty-two cents per kilogram of paintings and eight cents per kilogram of statuary. Honduras lays a tax of one dollar and twenty cents a pound on all 'art.' Nicaragua forty-one cents a pound (on paintings), San Salvador, five per cent ad valorem, and Ecuador four cents a pound."

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AN esteemed Philadelphian collector and connoisseur is credited with having recently remarked to a reporter of The New York World:

"If some unknown artist were to come to New York City from Herkimer County with landscapes as wonderful as Corot's, but on a different method and treated in an unfamiliar way, the buyers would probably say: 'That may be art, but I don't understand it,' and they wouldn't buy until the new method had been approved by a consensus of opinion. Now, Corot's sheep, for example, people admire greatly. Yet Corot put a daub of paint on his canvas, christened it a sheep, and a sheep it is."

There is much more truth than one might care to admit in the general proposition inferred in these remarks; but it is a mistake to give the impression that any connoisseur admires Corot's animals per se. They are merely incidental in his landscapes, which are admired not because of them, but in spite of them.

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THE sale in Paris of the Laroche-Lacarelle library resulted in some surprising prices for books not usually highly esteemed, and vice versa. The Bible, in 8 vols., translation of Lemaistre de Lacy, Paris, 1711, brought 5450 francs, while Simon Vostre's "Heures a L'usage de Rome," bound up by Bauzonnet with "La Danse des Morts," brought but 1235 fr. M. Paillet bought an "Hours of the Virgin," MS. on vellum of the beginning of the sixteenth century, for 22,250 fr. An "Horæ" printed on vellum, with 18 large cuts by Geoffrey Tory, the only example known, brought 3050 fr. A book of "Offices" of the seventeenth century, in a binding by Padeloup, went to 18,600 fr., while a manuscript Calendar on vellum, of the first half of the fifteenth century, with 17 large miniatures and bound by Clovis Eye, went for 3300 fr. Another, of the Florentine school, written and illuminated for Lorenzo de Medici, with his arms on the cover, brought but 3900 fr. The total amounted to 544,000 fr.

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IN some respects, the sale of paintings belonging to Goupil & Co. was one of the most important of last

year. It was, it is true, a clearance sale; but the figures obtained for several of the pictures, when contrasted with what Goupil & Co. had asked for them, are instructive. Boulanger's "Via Appia" brought \$1330; the price asked for it had been \$2000. Corot's "Cows in a Meadow," priced at \$2000, brought but \$910. Delacroix's "The Natchez," also priced at \$2000, went for just half that sum. Three pictures by Louis Falero were put up at \$1600 each; "Berenice's Hair" brought \$290; "The Virgin of the Zodiac," \$240, and "Iris," \$250. For Gérôme's "Captive," Boussod, Valadon & Cie. had asked \$800; it brought \$450. For his "Bather Smoking" \$1200 had been asked; it went for \$400. Hector Leroux's "Fishers" brought \$330, against \$800, the asking price; and his "The Fountain," \$370, instead of \$800. Still, some very good prices were obtained for other works. Dagnan-Bouveret's "Un Accident" brought \$2050; Diaz's "In The Forest," \$2200; Isabey's "The Royal Fishing Party," \$2860; Jacques's "Shepherdess," \$2080; Jacquet's "Automne," \$1020; James Maris's "A Canal in Holland," \$920; Troyon's "Pasturage in Normandy," \$1020; Vollon's "Cherries," \$940; and Ziem's "Windmill in Holland," \$920. The six water-colors of the Panorama of Champigny, by Detaille and De Neuville, brought \$6780.

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THE sale of the pictures belonging to Mr. Ch. Tillot brought out a few notable works, among which the principal was Millet's "Shepherdess," a variant in pastel of the painting belonging to the King of the Belgians. "The shepherdess is knitting in advance of her flock, on a great plain which extends to the horizon. The sun, hidden behind a thin cloud, flushes the sky and distance with light, against which the dark figure of the shepherdess is relieved." Bought by the dealer Sichel for an English amateur for \$4200. Another pastel of Millet's, his "Garden at Barbizon," with a peasant woman cutting cabbages, and three little girls looking on from the garden path, brought \$2140. An oil painting of a donkey brought \$1640, and a crayon drawing, "Going to the Fields," a study for Millet's etching of the same subject, brought \$204. A view of the bridge and castle of St. Angelo by Corot, sold for \$1810. A sketch in crayon by Delacroix, "Faust and Mephistopheles on the Night of the Sabbath," from the Villot collection, sold for \$60. Some water-colors by Th. Rousseau brought what were considered good prices. "Edge of a Wood at St. Bréau," in India ink, \$200; "Little Wood in the Plain of Barbizon," \$210; and "Village of Saint-Ferjeux," \$195.

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AT the Bolckow sale at Christie's, London, May 5th, a Knaus, "The Cup of Coffee," was bought by Mr. Wallis for \$4095; Boussod, Valadon & Co. paid \$3727 for Gérôme's "Prayer in the East;" Mr. Agnew gave \$10,500 for Troyon's "Le Bac," painted in 1856; and Boussod, Valadon & Co., \$10,342 for Meissonier's "A Boire," painted in 1865. Rosa Bonheur's "Denizens of the Highlands" went for \$29,135 to Mr. Agnew; the city of Manchester purchased a Schreyer, "Abandoned," for \$2625; and Mr. Graves, a Josef Israels, "Waiting for the Return of the Herring Fleet," for \$3150. Of English works, David Cox's "Driving Home the Flock" went to Mr. Graves for \$6825 and his "Counting the Flock" for \$10,395 to Mr. Agnew. The latter bought a Faed, "The Silken Gown," for \$7611; a Landseer, "Intruding Puppies," went for \$5250 to Mr. Colnaghi; another, "Braemar," for \$24,752 to Mr. Agnew; Maclise's "Eve of Saint Agnes" brought \$2020, and was purchased by Mr. Agnew, who also got Millais's "Northwest Passage" for \$21,000, Morland's "Horse Fair" for \$2132, a Nasmyth, "Meeting of the Avon and the Severn," for \$7875; what is said to have been a very poor Romney, "Lady Hamilton," for \$6562, and a Gainsborough Portrait of Elizabeth, Duchess of Grafton, for \$5092.

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THERE would seem to be an unusual interest in Gainsborough just now, and the name of the Duchess of Devonshire, which is destined to be indissolubly connected with that of the famous English painter, comes up again unexpectedly in relation with it. I read in a London paper: "Recently in demolishing a house in New Bond Street, London, a canvas, rolled up and in rather bad condition, was discovered, which when unrolled turned out to be (or so it is claimed) a portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire by Gainsborough. It is valued at £10,000, and though it will have to be remounted, it is not supposed that that will lessen its value in the least." It is not

generally known that in the mansion of Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt hangs one of the finest portraits by Gainsborough. It is that of Mrs. Elliott, a beautiful Englishwoman, who is shown in profile and full length. Her hair is powdered, in the fashion of her day, and her costume is such as might be worn by "Lady Teazle."

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AT the Goldschmidt sale an Italian bust of the fifteenth century, supposed to be that of Isota da Rimini, life-size, the costume painted in red and blue, heightened with gilding, was bought for \$2900 for the Louvre. A bust of a youth, in the style of Michael Angelo, brought \$2500; a panther, after the antique, in jasper, was bought by Mr. F. Bischoffsheim for \$2200; a bust in bronze, of the sixteenth century, "Lucius Verus," sold for \$900; a Venus standing, and holding by the hand a Cupid, same period and material, \$640; a "Bacchante" with cymbals, partly draped, \$2100; a "Hercules," French bronze, of the seventeenth century, \$1080. Two flambeaux in Italian blue and white faience, decorated with trophies of arms, masks and scrolls, went to \$2020. At the sale of the Baron Seillière, June 4th to 6th, a Carpeaux, marble, "Fishing," brought \$646; a Clesinger, marble, "Cleopatra," \$187, and another "Cleopatra" by the same, \$173. A Louis XV. clock in chiselled and gilt bronze, signed St. Germain, sold for \$500.

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OF Barye's finest water-colors, "An Elephant Lying Down," bought by Mr. Tillot at the Th. Rousseau sale, sold for \$194. Another Barye aquarelle, a "Lion at the Foot of a Rock," brought \$230. It may be interesting to compare these prices with those (\$500 and \$550) paid for two similar aquarelles by Barye at the Albert Spencer sale last spring. At the recent Goldschmidt sale in Paris, by the way, among the Barye bronzes, the group of "Arab Cavaliers Attacking a Lion," an early proof with brown patina, brought \$420; "Theseus and the Centaur," \$376; the "Lion Crushing a Serpent," \$360, and "Bull at Bay," \$336.

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AT the Pertuiset sale several pictures by Manet were disposed of. "The Good Pipe" brought \$310; "Combat of Bulls," \$240; "The Melon," \$141; "The Jambon," \$260; "Bouquet of Roses and Lilacs," \$158, and others for less money.

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IT has often been remarked that auctioneers make poor collectors, which is, no doubt, the reason why small prices prevail at the sales of their effects after death. Mr. Ch. Pillet seems to have been no exception to the rule, for we find that his Giorgione, "Shepherd and Young Girl," brought but \$143; his Greuze, "Portrait of Gensonné," \$63; his "Portrait of the Duchess of Buckingham," by Mytens, \$10. A terra-cotta "attributed to Clodion," "Nereids and Tritons," went for \$60. One by Carpeaux, a bust of a female, brought \$61. Of other objects, those which brought the best prices were: A plate of Hispano-Arab ware, \$108; a secretaire in black and gold lacquer, garnished with chiselled and gilt copper, of the time of Louis XVI., \$436, and two tapestries of the period of Louis XIV. (one of them in two pieces, which do not match), which brought \$760.

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THE Greek Government, it appears, is beginning to pursue seriously the persons who, in defiance of the law which forbids the exportation of antiquities on pain of confiscation, have for some time past been selling their finds in London and Paris. In the latter city a number of Tanagra statuettes have been seized at the house of one of these people, and a quantity of vases and gems at that of another, and an attempt is to be made to regain possession of a very curious bust of Athene with a crown arranged to represent all the buildings of the Acropolis.

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THEY have experts in Paris who are supposed to protect collectors from imposition. But expert Bloche, I see by the French papers, is charged with organizing mock auctions quite after the fashion of our own auctioneers in New York, where we have no experts. A certain Mr. de Carmona, a Mexican, having to return to Mexico for a short period, the enterprising Mr. Bloche is said to have hired his Paris residence, filled it with all sorts of stuff from the bric-a-brac dealers, and then announced in The Figaro, a "truly extraordinary sale," with a great flourish of trumpets. Probably half the furniture auctions in private houses advertised in New York are of this sort.

MONTEZUMA.

MMA